

# **Disposal Reporting System Training**

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Welcome to the Disposal Reporting System Training.

# **Disposal Reporting System Training**

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## **Disposal Reporting System Training**

- **Training on the DRS for waste haulers; landfill, transfer station and waste-to-energy operators; cities and counties**
- **Separate modules for easy access to information on requirements and responsibilities related to the DRS**
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

This training, produced by the California Integrated Waste Management Board, also known as the Board, is aimed at helping participants understand the law and requirements that form the basis for the Disposal Reporting System. The Disposal Reporting System, often referred to as the DRS, was developed by the Board to track each city's and county's waste disposal tonnages. This is important because cities and counties use these disposal tonnages to calculate their recycling rates to show they have met the law.

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Three pictures: Top picture is of a blue disposal facility sign that requests where the trash is from. Right-side picture is of a bulldozer crushing waste on a landfill face as self-haulers are unloading their garbage nearby. Bottom picture is of a truck at a transfer station gatehouse.

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Tracking disposal tons in the DRS involves many groups of people, each with different jobs or purposes: waste haulers, landfill, transfer station, and waste-to-energy operators; city and county employees; and residents or businesses that haul waste to the landfill.

This DRS training will focus on requirements for haulers, operators and city and county employees as participants in the DRS. It is divided into separate parts so that the information can be easily accessed by each group.

Also included in this training are commonly asked questions about the DRS and additional references and resources you may find useful.

## **Table of Contents**

1. **Overview of the Disposal Reporting System**
2. **Waste Hauler Training Module**
3. **Landfill / Waste-to-Energy Facility Operator Module**
4. **Transfer Station Facility Operator Module**
5. **Agency Training Module**
6. **References and Resources**

The Table of Contents lists the separate training modules allowing you to easily access information.

## **Overview of Disposal Reporting System**



Picture of a vehicle on a scale at a landfill gatehouse.

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We begin with an Overview of the Disposal Reporting System.



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Picture of garbage trucks disposing waste at a landfill face while a bulldozer crushes waste nearby with seagulls hovering overhead.

It used to be that most of our garbage was collected and hauled to landfills to be disposed. As landfills began to fill up quickly and as land became more scarce and expensive, California found itself in the middle of a landfill crisis.

As a result, in 1989 the Legislature passed Assembly Bill 939 to help tackle this problem.

## **The Law**

**AB 939 and other solid waste laws were passed to tackle the problem of scarce landfill space:**

- **Each city and county must cut in half the amount of waste it disposes**
- **Preventing waste, reusing, recycling, and composting = diversion**
- **Up to \$10,000 a day fine for city or county non-compliance**

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AB 939 was the first of several solid waste laws that were passed to tackle the problem of scarce landfill space.

Under these new laws, cities and counties are required to cut their waste in half by finding ways for residents, businesses and industries to reduce the waste they make by recycling or composting or by keeping it from becoming waste in the first place. We refer to this as waste prevention.

Waste prevention includes habits, such as buying fewer items and reusing them, or fixing and repairing the items we use instead of throwing them away.



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Two pictures: Top picture is a pile of green waste. Bottom picture is of truck parked near a large load of cardboard.

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We can also reduce our waste by recycling more bottles, cans, newspapers, cardboard and by composting our lawn and tree trimmings. All of these activities are called diversion because they divert things that normally would go to a landfill or transfer station to be disposed.

If a city or county fails to do this, it may face a fine of up to \$10,000 a day.

## **What Must Cities and Counties Do To Meet the Law?**

- **Plan programs to focus on reuse, reduce, recycle, and compost**
- **Plan safe disposal of what cannot be recycled or composted**
- **Report to the CIWMB on amount of waste reduced because of these programs.**

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What must cities and counties do to meet the law?

The law requires each city and county to write plans to set up activities and programs to focus first on: reducing waste from its residents and businesses through reuse, recycling and composting, and then to plan for safe disposal of waste that cannot be recycled or composted.



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Picture of used carpet ready to be recycled.

These plans must be approved by the Board. There are well over 400 such plans written by cities and counties, each with its own set of programs geared toward diverting waste from landfills. The law allows some cities and counties to join together in preparing plans and in setting up programs to help save money needed to finance these programs.

If a new city incorporates, it also must prepare a plan with programs that will reduce its waste.

To make sure everything is on track, every year each city must report to the Board on their recycling and composting activities, and on how much they were able to divert from landfills.



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Picture of a recycle drop-off center with a sign displaying hours of operation.

As a result of the laws that have been passed, cities and counties currently operate over 4500 recycling and composting programs combined and established more than 2500 waste prevention programs.

These programs cover a wide range of activities, from drop-off recycling centers, such as the one shown here, to food waste and backyard composting to businesses purchasing products with less packaging or products made with recycled content material.

We are striving to maintain a 50% diversion rate, which means half of California residents and businesses' waste are diverted away from being disposed at landfills through recycling, composting, reuse or some other waste diversion method.

## **How Do We Know How Much Waste Is Diverted?**

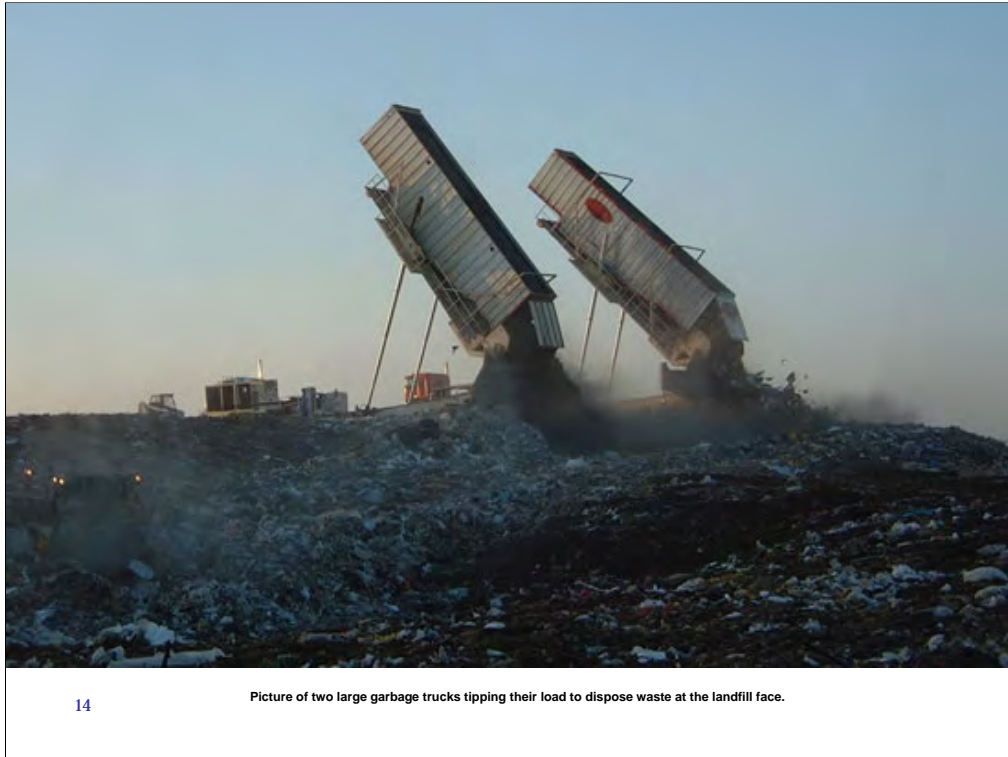


Picture of bulldozer pushing lumber and other C&D materials into a pile.

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To find out how much waste a city or county has diverted it must find out two things.

1. How much waste the city's or county's residents and businesses generate...



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Picture of two large garbage trucks tipping their load to dispose waste at the landfill face.

And

2. How much waste is disposed by its residents and businesses.

Each city and county has done a study on how much waste its residents, businesses and industries produce.

Scales at landfills, transfer stations and waste-to-energy plants weigh and measure the waste coming in for disposal.

Knowing these two things, a city or county can figure out about how much waste is diverted through its waste prevention and reuse, recycling and composting activities, and report that to the Board to show their progress in meeting the law.



## **How Do We Know How Much Waste Is Disposed?**



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Picture of a truck parked at a landfill gatehouse.

Operators collect information from drivers at the gatehouse. Waste loads are weighed and attendants may ask the driver for the name of the city or county it came from.

Some waste hauling companies may send information to the operator on waste loads by electronic mail or some other method, rather than getting it from the driver. Summary information is reported to the DRS by the county.

Cities and counties use the disposal numbers reported in the DRS to calculate their recycling rates which are reported to the Board.

Based on this information, the Board then decides whether a city or county is successful in meeting the law.

## **The Disposal Reporting System: What is it? Why is it Important?**

- **Tracks individual city and county solid waste disposal**
- **Used by cities and counties to calculate recycling rates to show they have met the law**
- **Helps a city or county better understand how waste disposal changes season-to-season**
- **Helps by find more recycling opportunities**
- **Shows how waste is hauled into and out of a county's boundaries**

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The Disposal Reporting System is a database that stores information on how much waste each city and county sends to California landfills.

Cities and counties use the disposal numbers in the DRS to calculate their recycling rates which is used by the Board to decide whether they have met the law.



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Two pictures: top picture is of green waste. Bottom picture is a pile of "Winter Holiday" trees to be converted to green waste.

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But disposal information in the DRS can also be used to help a city or county better understand how the waste from its community changes throughout the year, either with the season or other events that may occur. For instance, grass clippings and tree trimmings are in the highest amounts in the summer, whereas, the holiday season may see higher amounts of wrapping paper and Christmas trees. Knowing this, city and county officials can better plan for recycling opportunities like composting or Christmas tree pick-up and recycling.

Disposal information can also show how waste travels into and out of a county's boundaries. This allows county officials to better plan for the waste disposal needs of the community.

## **Waste Flow in California**

- **Waste flow is complex and ever changing**
- **Waste flows across county lines and state borders**

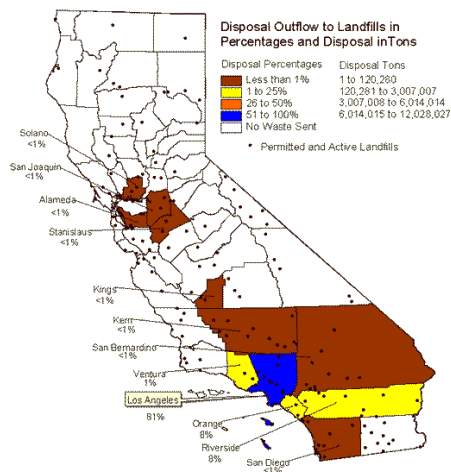
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Many cities and counties have been interested to learn how waste travels within and outside of its own boundaries.

When the Disposal Reporting System began, no one realized how complex and changing the flow of waste is in California.

Waste flows across county and state lines, and is continuously changing.

## Los Angeles County: Waste Outflow to Landfills in 2003



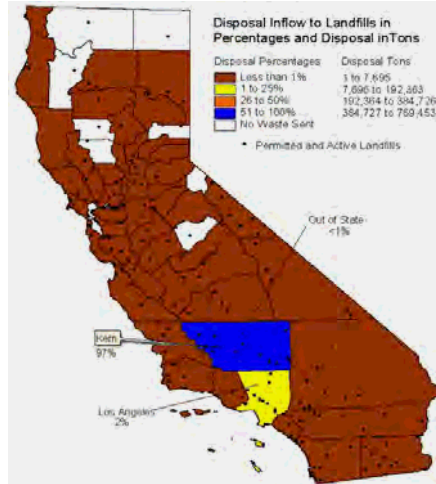
California map showing where waste was disposed that originated from Los Angeles cities.

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To illustrate this, we have here a map of California that shows how waste was produced in one county and sent to several counties for disposal.

This map shows how Los Angeles County, shown as blue, disposes of over 50 percent of its waste within the county. But not all of the waste produced by residents and businesses in Los Angeles County ends up being disposed in the county. The brown and yellow areas show the 9 counties where waste from Los Angeles County was also sent for disposal.

## Kern County: Waste Inflow from Jurisdictions in 2003



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California map showing where waste originated that was disposed in Kern county.

Likewise, some counties may receive waste from other counties to be disposed. Here is another map of California showing several counties (in brown) that send waste to be disposed in Kern County, shown in blue.

## **In DRS, Accuracy is the Best Policy**

- **Cities and counties use the DRS information to calculate their recycling rates**
- **Accurate city and county waste disposal information is critical**
- **DRS web training guide focuses on getting accurate information**

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As you can see from the previous maps about how garbage crosses over county boundaries, it often is difficult to track where a city's or county's waste actually ends up.

And because each city's and county's recycling rate depends on the DRS information, accurate information is critical.

The DRS web training guide focuses on how to obtain the most accurate information while making it easier to understand your job in DRS.

This concludes the overview of the Disposal Reporting System Training.

**Zero Waste**

**[www.ciwmb.ca.gov](http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov)**